

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 052608

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, MARCH 8, 1977

1. THE FOLLOWING Q. AND A. IS EXCERPTED FROM THE MARCH 8,
DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING:

2. Q: WHEN RONALD REAGAN SUGGESTED IN SACRAMENTO THAT U.S.
TROOPS MIGHT BE USED AS PART OF A U.N. PEACE-KEEPING
MISSION IN RHODESIA YOU MAY RECALL THE FORD CAMPAIGN
ISSUED ADS SAYING GOVERNOR REAGAN COULDN'T START A WAR;
PRESIDENT REAGAN COULD

MY QUESTION IS: DID AMBASSADOR YOUNG DISCUSS HIS PROPOSAL
OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE PRECISELY WHAT GOVERNOR REAGAN PRO-
POSED WITH SECRETARY VANCE BEFORE MAKING IT?

A: ON THAT SUBJECT I BELIEVE JODY POWELL AT SOME LENGTH
YESTERDAY CLARIFIED THE CONTEXT OF THAT REMARK. THAT WAS
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A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION; THAT THERE IS NO CONSIDERATION
BEING GIVEN TO THAT KIND OF THING IN THE GOVERNMENT; AND
THAT IT WAS IN A PURELY HYPOTHETICAL CONTEXT. IN OTHER
WORDS, IT WAS COVERED IN DETAIL.

Q: SINCE JODY SAYS IT IS HYPOTHETICAL, VERY HYPOTHETICAL,
THE STATE DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH JODY RATHER THAN WITH

AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S STATEMENT THAT U.N. TROOPS MIGHT BE USED?

A: I AM JUST SAYING PRECISELY WHAT JODY POWELL SAID YESTERDAY, IN EXPLAINING THE CONTEXT OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S REMARKS, WHICH WERE MADE AT AN INFORMAL LUNCH WITH A GROUP OF NEWSMEN, A PURELY HYPOTHETICAL DISCUSSION OF VARIOUS ISSUES.

Q: HAS HE SAID, TO YOUR KNOWLEDGE, THAT IT WAS PURELY HYPOTHETICAL?

A: ABSOLUTELY.

Q: AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID THAT?

A: YES. I TALKED TO HIM THIS MORNING AND HE CLARIFIED THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THIS STATEMENT WAS MADE.

Q: JUST HYPOTHETICAL DOESN'T SAY THAT IT IS NOT TRUE. LET'S JUST PIN IT DOWN.

ARE YOU SAYING THEN THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG WAS SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF; HE WAS NOT REFLECTING ANY U.S. POLICY?

A: I AM SAYING HE WAS -- WELL, FIRST OF ALL, AS JODY POWELL SAID YESTERDAY, IT DOESN'T REFLECT ANY CONSIDERATION BEING GIVEN TO THAT KIND OF THING BEING TALKED ABOUT BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.
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I AM TRYING TO GIVE YOU THE CONTEXT OF HOW -- OVER AN INFORMAL LUNCH KICKING AROUND VARIOUS IDEAS, NOT ENUNCIATING POLICIES, CERTAINLY NOT MAKING POLICY -- HOW THIS KIND OF INTERPRETATION ARISES.

Q: MORE PRECISELY, IS IT IN CONFLICT, IS IT IN OPPOSITION TO THE PRESENT U.S. POLICY?

A: WHAT?

Q: THE IDEA OF SENDING U.S. TROOPS TO SOUTHERN AFRICA.

A: I JUST SAID IT IS NOT UNDER CONSIDERATION.

Q: OKAY. THEN IT IS IN CONFLICT AND DOES NOT REPRESENT --

A: I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU MEAN BY "CONFLICT". THERE ISN'T ANY CONFLICT INVOLVED. IT WAS A VERY INFORMAL CON-

TEXT OF DISCUSSING VARIOUS IDEAS. THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO CONFLICT.

Q: DID HE ALSO TELL YOU WHY HE MADE THAT PROPOSAL OR WHAT HE HAD IN MIND?

A: HE WASN'T MAKING A PROPOSAL.

I AM GIVING YOU THE CONTEXT OF SITTING AROUND, OVER AN INFORMAL LUNCH FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS, TALKING ABOUT VARIOUS IDEAS AND THIS IS THE CONTEXT OF IT. YOU ARE NOT SITTING DOWN IN A POLICY DISCUSSION CONTEXT, OF FORMULATING FORMAL PROPOSALS.

Q: YOU MEAN IT JUST CAME INTO HIS HEAD AND HE THOUGHT IT WAS A GOOD IDEA TO TALK ABOUT IT?

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A: I HAVE GIVEN YOU THE CONTEXT -- OVER LUNCH. THAT IS THE WAY IT WAS.

Q: WELL, THE REASON WHY THIS INTERESTS US, OF COURSE, IS HE IS NOT A CONGRESSMAN FROM GEORGIA, HE IS A MEMBER OF THE PRESIDENT'S CABINET AND PRESUMABLY SPEAKS AT SOME TIME WITH PRESIDENTIAL AUTHORITY. IN THIS CASE YOU ARE SAYING HE IS NOT.

A: IT WAS JUST AN INFORMAL LUNCHEON CHAT.

Q: FRED, IN THAT INFORMAL LUNCHEON CHAT HE IS ALSO QUOTED AS SAYING THAT NO ONE HAS CONFIDENCE IN THE BRITISH ANY MORE CONCERNING RHODESIA. DOES THAT REFLECT ADMINISTRATION THINKING OR IS THAT OFF THE TOP OF YOUNG'S HEAD?

A: I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO A LINE BY LINE DISCUSSION --

Q: WELL, WHEN GENERAL BROWN SAID THAT HE WAS --

A: LET ME FINISH --

Q: OKAY.

A: I AM NOT GOING TO GET INTO A LINE-BY-LINE DISCUSSION OF THIS RATHER DISCURSIVE ARTICLE. I WOULD JUST SAY THAT OBVIOUSLY WE HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH THE BRITISH AND CONSULTING WITH THEM ON THE PROBLEMS OF RHODESIA, AND IT IS QUITE CLEAR WE FEEL THAT THEY ARE VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN THE PROCESS, AS THE SOVEREIGN POWER, AND THAT WE SUPPORT THEM.

Q: THEY COULDN'T HELP BUT BE INVOLVED BECAUSE IT IS A
BREAK-WAY BRITISH COLONY.

DO YOU HAVE CONFIDENCE IN BRITAIN'S ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE
TO A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

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A: YES, WE DO.

Q: WHY DOESN'T MR. YOUNG?

A: WELL, I AM NOT GOING TO, AS I SAY, GET INTO CRITIQUING
ALL HIS WORDS. I AM JUST EXPRESSING AN ANSWER TO KEN'S
QUESTION WHETHER OR NOT WE HAVE CONFIDENCE. OBVIOUSLY WE
DO. WE ARE GOING TO CONTINUE OUR PROCESS OF CONSULTATION
WITH THEM IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEM OF RHODESIA, AND I THINK IT IS QUITE CLEAR WE HAVE
BEEN DOING THAT AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

Q: IN YOUR DISCUSSION WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG THIS MORNING
WHERE HE CLARIFIED THAT THERE WAS AN INFORMAL LUNCHEON,
DID HE FEEL THAT IN ANY WAY HE WAS QUOTED OUT OF CONTEXT?
HE KNEW, OF COURSE, HE WAS TALKING TO JOURNALISTS. DID
HE ASK THEM TO KEEP IT OFF THE RECORD?

A: NO. IT WAS ON THE RECORD.

Q: IT WAS ON THE RECORD.

A: YES.

Q: HE DEFINITELY MADE THESE STATEMENTS THAT YOU NOW HAVE
TO DENY?

A: WELL, I DIDN'T TALK TO HIM ABOUT THAT ASPECT OF IT. I
DO KNOW THAT IT WAS ON THE RECORD.

Q: ON THE RECORD.

A: IN THE CONTEXT THAT I HAVE DESCRIBED TO YOU.

Q: WAS AMBASSADOR YOUNG INSTRUCTED TO CLARIFY HIS REMARKS
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IN THIS DISCUSSION WITH YOU?

A: WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

Q: WELL, HOW -- I DON'T NORMALLY ASK YOU HOW COME YOU AND HE WERE ON THE PHONE, BUT --

A: I TALK TO HIM FREQUENTLY.

Q: YOU TALK TO HIM FREQUENTLY?

A: YES.

Q: IN OTHER WORDS, HE WASN'T UNDER ANY INSTRUCTIONS FROM ANY SUPERIORS HE MIGHT HAVE TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT FOR YOU SO YOU COULD SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT FOR US?

A: NO. ABSOLUTELY NOT. NO.

Q: ON THE SAME LINE, HAS THERE BEEN -- SINCE THESE REMARKS WERE KNOWN, HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONVERSATION BETWEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND THE SECRETARY, BETWEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND MR. SCHAUFLE, OR ANY OTHER PRINCIPAL IN THE DEPARTMENT, IN THE WAY OF CLARIFYING THESE REMARKS. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONVERSATION OTHER THAN YOURS WITH THE AMBASSADOR?

A: I KNOW ONLY OF MY CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG, AND I DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE HE HAS TALKED TO. HE IS ON THE PHONE A LOT. SO, I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHO ELSE HE HAS TALKED TO.
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